

POST

Signing the document which, almost unnoticed by the world, delivered a million men to the Allies and spared Northern Italy a bath of blood. The man seated is a representative of Obergruppenführer Karl Wolff, an incredible figure in the cloak-and-dagger drama.

The Secret History of a Surrender

By FORREST DAVIS

THE precise details of how the war in Italy guttered out at noonday on May second, last, with the orderly surrender of what Mr. Churchill exuberantly computed at "a million men"—although only twenty-six combat divisions were left afoot—may well have escaped you. History was piling up too fast around the beginning of May. The fall of Northern Italy was overshadowed by other events: the putative suicide of Hitler, the degradation of the mortal remains of Il Duce in a Milanese square, and the crumbling of the utterly beaten *Reichswehr* in Germany itself.

After D day in Normandy the war in Italy had seemed, in any case, a sort of side show—the "forgotten front," Mark Clark's men termed it with some bitterness—and no American back home deserves censure for being hazy about the signing of the Northern Italy capitulation on April twenty-ninth at Field Marshal Sir Harold Alexander's AFHQ at Caserta. AFHQ was domiciled, in case you've forgotten, in the summer palace of the ancient kings of Naples, a minor Versailles with some of the finest gardens in Europe.

The mass surrender of the German armies in Northern Italy didn't just happen. Behind that event is an amazing story with all the trimmings of an Oppenheim novel.

Present for the enemy, at the signing, were Lt. Col. Viktor von Schweinitz—a towheaded, wispy-mustached Junker who happens to be descended through an American grandmother from John Jay, our first chief justice—and Maj. Max Wenner, short, dark and definitely non-Nordic. You will come across Schweinitz and Wenner again in this narrative when certain of their superiors will vainly attempt to dishonor their signatures at the eleventh hour and fight on back into the Alps.

The Caserta ceremony, signaling the first of the historic Nazi surrenders of 1945, took only twenty minutes. For so brief a function it accomplished

much, putting an end, for one thing, to American casualties in that theater and sending home many a G. I. who otherwise would have been buried in Italian soil. Forestalling fanatical Nazi hopes of a last stand in an Alpine redoubt, the surrender likewise checkmated a plot for organizing remnants of the defeated armies into a corps of Werewolves. Contributing to the subsequent surrenders in Germany—in Bavaria, Von Kesselring finally sued for peace through Caserta—the April twenty-ninth event definitely shortened the war in Europe. Certain authorities believe that, by breaking the spine of German resistance, the surrender of Northern Italy provided an early, clean-cut termination to a war which might otherwise have dragged on for days, or even a week or two, longer.

So much is known. What could not be made public until now was the background of the capitulation, which, by no means an impromptu act, had been preceded by eight weeks of conversations between American intelligence authorities and defeatist Germans; negotiations—although the Americans, bent on unconditional surrender, disliked the word—that were conducted principally in neutral, spy-infested Switzerland by Maj. Gen. William J. Donovan's Office of Strategic Services. The O. S. S.



The German-American Gero S. Gaevnitz, one of the shadow figures.



Some of the leading actors in the international melodrama. The booted Nazi is Vietinghoff, the one at the extreme right is Wolff.



Mystery-man at our end was A. W. Dulles, of the Office of Strategic Services.

throughout its career has indignantly denied that its far-flung activities go forward in a cloak-and-dagger atmosphere. In the case of the Italian surrender, General Donovan's men have preferred to say that it was, while skillfully handled, the work of earnest amateurs. Actually, however, the proceedings at times had all the trimmings of an E. Phillips Oppenheim novel, at other moments providing tongue-in-cheek melodramatics reminiscent of Alfred Hitchcock's movie thrillers. Little Wally, the Czech operator of clandestine radio stations inside the enemy lines, provided most of the Hitchcock moments.

Men risked their lives carrying the word across the Swiss-Italian and Swiss-Austrian borders—some crossing "white," that is, in a routine way with papers, others stealing over "black," by remote mountain passes. Among them were the Italian Baron Luigi Parrilli, who, before the war, sold American motor cars in Europe; *Schutzstaffel* officers surreptitiously selling out the Führer, and an American operative functioning as a Scarlet Pimpernel in reverse. It was his job to rescue the most notorious SS man in all Italy from the partisans because peace needed his assistance more than the partisans needed his blood.

Looming at all times over the conspirators was the black-hearted shadow of Heinrich Himmler—the evil genius of the surrender—engaged in counterespionage, dealing in *agents provocateurs* and holding the family of an SS general as hostages for his loyalty. Through the parleys came glimpses of a demoralized Führer, stewing in one air-raid shelter or another, alternately planning impossible counteroffensives, threatening the use of frightful last-resort weapons and issuing secret orders calculated to drive a wedge between Russia and the western powers. At the other end of the Axis, Mussolini supplied a kind of comedy relief; at one moment meditating death in battle at the head of a black-shirt brigade, at the next induced by the curvaceous Petacci sisters to arrange a refuge in Spain.

Apart from their military consequences, the negotiations, frequently discouraging and once abandoned by the Allies for four days at their very crisis, had wide political and economic results. Through these negotiations, Northern Italy was spared physical destruction and a vengeful massacre ordered by Hitler. The great cities, power plants and factories of the rich industrial north were salvaged for the stricken Italian economy because the Americans demanded it as the price of

peace. The ports of Genoa and Trieste were, moreover, preserved intact for Allied use, expediting the conquest of Austria—400 charges placed in Genoa harbor being defused by the Nazis themselves.

It is this story, the secret history of Northern Italy's deliverance, which can now be told because the Office of Strategic Services believes that the epic accomplishments of a handful of Americans can now be spread before the people through the Post. The records of the operation, known by the un-descriptive title of Sunrise Crossword, are replete with the necessary subterfuges common to such fascinating archives, down to code names and agents' numbers. Therein, for example, Kesselring may appear as Emperor, one SS officer as Critic, another as Graduate. A *nom de ruse* is chosen, it should hastily be explained, at complete random.

The first move in Sunrise—the shortened title which the O. S. S. gave this endeavor—came, a bit improbably, from a young SS first lieutenant named Guido Zimmer. His motives were equally improbable. A good Catholic who, loving his wife, resented Himmler's order enjoining illicit procreancy on likely young SS officers, Zimmer unquestionably set the ball rolling. This was back in January of this year. The Nazis in Italy, although dreading Alexander's promised spring offensive, still were riding high, wide and handsome along the Po. The SS officers were doing themselves especially well. Having enriched themselves by extorting bribes from

rich Jewish hostages and muscling into Italian industries with Nazi war orders, the elite guardsmen occupied the villas of the nobility and the high *bourgeoisie* and monopolized the best cafés in Milan, Genoa and Como.

Among the wealthiest and most exquisite of the SS plunderers was Gen. Karl Wolff, supreme commander of the *Waffen*, or fighting, SS, and police chief of Nazi-held Italy. An explosive, hard, blond Aryan, General Wolff had been a personal adjutant to Himmler. Coming to Italy from a high post at Führer headquarters, he was rightly regarded as a favorite of the Nazi upper crust, deriving great prestige from that assumption. A former advertising man in Berlin, Wolff fancied himself as an intellectual, a mystic of the Rudolf Hess school and a connoisseur of art. Subsequently Wolff was to lay unction to his soul because he claimed to have preserved the picture collections of the Uffizi and Pitti galleries as well as King Victor Emmanuel's coin collection. Outwardly resolute, Wolff was in January privately reading the handwriting on the wall. Soon, as we shall note, he would be as deep in the plot to betray the Führer and deliver Northern Italy as was his solemn young aide, Zimmer himself.

In January, with Wolff spreading defeatist doubts in the mind of his friend, Field Marshal Albert Kesselring, the *Oberkommandant* in Northern Italy, Zimmer was hearing the Hitler scorched-earth policy discussed in inner SS circles. Already disgruntled, as we have seen, Zimmer professed himself sickened at the prospect of seeing all Northern Italy blown to bits as the Nazis fell back on the Alps. Resolving to act, he turned to Baron Parrilli, who, as all Milan knew, had acquaintances in the Allied camp.

There are two stories about Parrilli. Certain partisans hold it against him that he had friendly relations with certain SS men. In his defense it is said that he dealt with the SS only for the purpose of extricating Jews from the Nazi clutches, having been instrumental in saving many. However that may be, Parrilli made thirteen trips across the border as a courier, daring Allied bombings on the roads, Himmler, the neo-Fascist secret police and the hostile partisans.

To Parrilli young Zimmer reported that high SS officers—for instance, *Standartenführer* Eugen Dollmann, a hard case, and even the potent Karl Wolff himself—were talking among themselves about how one might get in touch with the Allies with a view to ending a hopeless war, thus saving one's neck and Northern Italy at the



Striving hard to avoid attention, the conspirators came separately to this summer resort lake in Ascona and stayed behind locked doors.

same time. Others Zimmer mentioned as disheartened were even more exalted. Kesselring, for example, and Dr. Rudolf Rahn, Hitler's ambassador to Mussolini's sawdust republic. Even Heinrich Himmler's personal lackey in Northern Italy, a *Gruppenführer* named Harster, was reliably reported to be casting about for a way to leave the sinking ship with advantage to himself. Although Kesselring—who later was transferred to succeed Von Rundstedt in the West—was at this stage highly sympathetic with Wolff's sentiments, he became, as we shall see, a principal thorn in the side of Sunrise.

The Zimmer disclosures convinced Parrilli of two things: first, that behind its harsh façade, Nazi morale in Northern Italy was cracking wide open; and, secondly, that the weakest sector was the outright Nazis. Parrilli, quickly discovering that he had no direct access to Allied authorities, betthought himself of his old schoolmaster in Switzerland. Dr. Max Husmann, the master of a famous boys' school on the Zugerberg, near Zurich, was, as Parrilli knew, a dedicated busybody and a noble soul who circulated everywhere in Switzerland. No unlikely actor ever took part in a drama of international intrigue than the unworldly, intense Husmann.

Through his friend Max Waibel, both a doctor of philosophy and an intelligence major on the Swiss army's general staff, Doctor Husmann was able to complete the ring. Waibel took Husmann and his information to the one man in Switzerland able to deal with it effectively, Allen W. Dulles, the chief representative of the O. S. S. in Switzerland. As such, Mr. Dulles—who is the grandson of one Secretary of State, Gen. John W. Foster, the nephew of another, Robert Lansing, and the brother and peacetime law partner of John Foster Dulles—managed

varied and important activities for the United States in the common meeting ground of every hostile interest in Europe. With the war ended, it can be no secret that his jurisdiction included the enemy countries as well as those occupied, together with the underground forces therein.

A man of resource, Mr. Dulles had slipped into Switzerland in the fall of 1942 a few hours after the Nazis had closed the French border upon taking over unoccupied France. He crossed the frontier with the friendly connivance of the French guards, who outwitted the newly arrived Nazi agents out of admiration for Mr. Dulles' eloquent invocation of the memories of Lafayette and Pershing. A judgmental man of genuine charm, Mr. Dulles conducted the secret affairs of the United States, including Sunrise, with discretion, skill and perseverance. For Sunrise alone he deserves a medal.

Cracks in the Axis Wall

THE intelligence brought by Doctor Husmann left Dulles fairly cold. At the moment, Himmler, inspired by Hitler, was waging a peace offensive, primarily through Vienna, aimed at splitting the anti-Axis front. Himmler had sent word that the Nazis were willing to quit to the Western Allies alone, excluding the Soviet Union. This was naturally unacceptable. Suspecting that the word from Milan was another salient of Himmler's offensive, Dulles was also skeptical of inducing the surrender of the German military on other grounds.

Although the Western Allies never attempted to duplicate the Russian experiment with captured German officers, the O. S. S. had interviewed a number of imprisoned general officers late in 1944 with a view to using them as a lever on their colleagues still in the field. To this job was assigned Gero von S.

Gaevernitz, a German-born American who became Dulles' chief coadjutor with Sunrise. A year younger than Karl Wolff, Gaevernitz belonged to the same disillusioned German generation, but where the SS dignitary had taken the easy path of Nazi affiliation, Gaevernitz had migrated to the United States. He did so at the prompting of his liberal father, Dr. Gerhart von Schulze-Gaevernitz. In New York, young Gaevernitz had learned the banking business. Pearl Harbor day found him in Germany. A friend in the Foreign Office warned him that Hitler planned an early declaration of war. Gaevernitz reached Switzerland only six hours before Hitler acted.

The attempt to use the captured German generals had come to nothing, although it had the wholehearted support of Gen. Omar Bradley and the able collaboration of his G-2, Maj. Gen. Edward L. Sibert.

While the captured German generals agreed with Gaevernitz that further resistance was useless, their overtures to their comrades across the lines broke against the Gestapo agents who surrounded each *Reichswehr* field commander. Still shaken by the purge following the July twentieth attempt on Hitler's life, fearful of the reproaches of history, the West-front commanders fell back on the personal oaths they had sworn to Hitler. The O. S. S. had not yet learned that Hitler's elite corps, the SS, had less compunction about deserting him.

While Professor Husmann's seed fell at first on barren soil, other reports reaching Dulles from Northern Italy soon inclined him to listen more attentively. A *Reichswehr* staff officer, in Zurich exchanging free marks for Swiss francs, indiscreetly gossiped about the defeatism prevalent at headquarters. Dulles learned that the German consul at Lugano, a son of the

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The scene of the action. The battle-weary Nazis wanted to surrender an army and shorten the war and save thousands of lives. But they mistrusted one another, mistrusted the area's top commander and, above all, they mistrusted Adolf Hitler.

THE SECRET HISTORY OF A SURRENDER

(Continued from Page 11)

one-time Reich foreign secretary, Constantin von Neurath, had been sent by Kesselring to Von Rundstedt's headquarters to talk about peace. It seemed apparent to Dulles—and he so advised his superiors at AFHQ, London and Washington—that the situation in Northern Italy might be ripening toward capitulation.

A month intervened between Hsumann's first soundings of Dulles and Dulles' first talk with Baron Parrilli. That delay was due to Swiss skepticism as well as the American's reluctance. Not until late in February did the Swiss authorities accept the thesis that they had a stake in the orderly surrender of Northern Italy, preserving the economy of that region. The Swiss, moreover, did not want hordes of refugees and the wash of a defeated army pounding on their frontiers. Earlier they had withheld a visa from Parrilli, finally requiring a 10,000-franc bond from the professor, which he supplied. Seeing Parrilli late in February, Dulles agreed to receive a duly authenticated Nazi emissary, stipulating, however, that the terms must be unconditional surrender to all the Allies.

The Nazi conspirators selected Standartenführer Dollmann to make the first cast. By then Professor Hsumann, committed heart and soul to the cause of peace, thought it his duty to travel into Italy to indoctrinate Dollmann, warning him that the Americans would not negotiate terms, would spurn him if he came from Himmler, and under no circumstances would discuss accept-

ing a surrender without Russia. Although Dollmann, described as "a vivid personality, temperamental and egotistical," came with the prestige of a liaison officer among Kesselring, Wolff and Mussolini's generalissimo, Rodolfo Graziani, Dulles did not receive him personally. Instead he sent an associate to confer with him in a private room in the Restaurant Bianchi in Lugano.

The associate confined himself to exacting, as a test of good faith, the delivery to the Swiss frontier of two important Italian partisan leaders held by the Nazis—Prof. Ferruccio Parri, chief of the military resistance in Northern Italy, and a Major Usmiani, an officer who had been collaborating with the Americans. Parri was in the dungeon at Verona, Usmiani in Milan's notorious San Vittori prison. The door to negotiations being left open, Dollmann departed, promising to send back someone of higher rank.

Wolff arrived, with Dollmann and Zimmer, on March eighth. Still in this thing to the hilt, Hsumann met the Germans at Chiasso, on the frontier, riding with them to Zurich. Recurrently, he asked Wolff if the most tragic chapter in Germany's history was to end without one German performing a great and humane act. Once Wolff, traveling in a sealed compartment, asked the schoolmaster to leave him, but he did succeed in persuading Doctor Hsumann that he had a better side to him and that he, with Kesselring, had prevented the destruction of Rome, contrary to Hitler's orders. On the same train were Parri and Usmiani, still mystified by their deliverance.

Declining to receive Wolff until he had assured himself of the condition of the two patriots, Dulles visited Parri

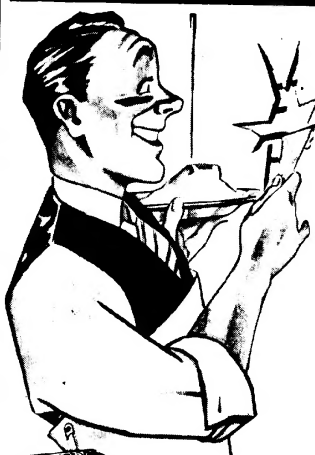
and Usmiani at the Hirslander clinic in Zurich, where they were under examination. Neither had been tortured. Dulles and Parri were warm friends. At that moment—with the Italian recalling his fear when brought from his cell that he was about to be shot—neither could have foreseen that within four months Parri, a member of the non-monarchist, non-Marxist Action party, would be prime minister of Italy.

Dulles met the SS general in his Zurich apartment. Also present were the German-American Gaevernitz and Schoolmaster Hsumann. The Americans knew that Wolff had a long record as a dyed-in-the-wool Nazi, that he had served with the notorious Von Epp at Munich as well as with Himmler. Before the meeting, Wolff had submitted numerous credentials, including a full-page photograph of himself in a German weekly publication and a list of references headed by Rudolf Hess.

While Dulles listened impassively, Wolff, a rapid-fire talker, explained that both he and Kesselring knew the war to be lost and wished to quit, without reference to Hitler or Himmler, in order to avoid further bloodshed and the razing of Northern Italy. Professing himself a friend of England and America, he expressed the hope that something he might do might palliate the aversion in which he knew Germany to be held in those countries. Unlike Dollmann, he did not speak of his personal fate beyond saying that, not being a war criminal, he had no fears of Allied justice. Promising to hand Northern Italy to Dulles on a silver platter, he agreed in further token of good faith, to deliver into Switzerland several hundred interned Jews, to stand personally responsible for the welfare of 350 American and British prisoners of war at Mantua, and to free another important resistance leader, Sogno Franchi.

Accustomed to the blatant tirades of the party comrades, Wolff confessed himself enormously taken with Dulles' correctly firm suavity. "How different these Americans are from what we have been told," he exclaimed to Hsumann. To the Swiss he confided a curiously mystical belief that he was being spared for some great purpose. A year before, he had walked away from an airplane that had crashed a tree, killing the other passengers. Twice during the Sunrise conversations, that faith was confirmed. When he was returning from the March-eighth interview with Dulles, Allied fighter bombers raked his motor car as it proceeded from Milan to his headquarters at Fasano on Lake Garda, wounding his chauffeur and a staff officer. A machine-gun bullet punctured the tail of his blouse, and on Parrilli's next trip Wolff sent the scorched shred of the garment to Dulles, asking that the Allied air forces work over the Milan-Fasano road lightly in future. Again, while he was riding to an inspection with Mussolini, the road was attacked, killing a lieutenant and wounding the chauffeur of Wolff's car, but leaving him skin-whole.

So confident had been Wolff, so closely did his assurances jibe with other information, that Dulles felt justified in asking AFHQ for assistance in buttoning up the surrender. Alexander accordingly sent two senior officers: Maj. Gen. Lyman L. Lemnitzer, U. S. A., assistant chief of staff at Caserta, and the British Maj. Gen. Terence S. Airey, AFHQ intelligence chief. The story of how O. S. S. smuggled the generals into Switzerland under the dog-tag



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aquatic occupations and the ships or boats appropriate to their pursuit. Match up seven or more of them with the right craft in the opposite column and you've won your sea legs. You'll find the answers upside-down below.

Which craft would you use . . .

1. to go rowing on the Bosphorus?
2. to transport coal?
3. to ride the canals of Venice?
4. for logging?
5. to go sailing on the Mediterranean?
6. to cruise in Chinese and neighboring waters?
7. to go hunting with the Eskimos?
8. for fishing?
9. for trading in the Indian Ocean?
10. to transport refuse?

- a. felluca
- b. caique
- c. junk
- d. baggala
- e. kayak
- f. collier
- g. smack
- h. wanigan
- i. scow
- j. gondola

—ALAN A. BROWN.

Answers: 1-b; 2-f; 3-j; 4-h; 5-a; 6-c; 7-e; 8-g; 9-d; 10-i.



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identities of two U. S. Army sergeants, Nicholson and McNeely, and how they lived for weeks behind drawn blinds in Dulles' house at Bern—venturing out only to buy dog biscuit for the dachshund Fritz acquired by Airey—is already familiar to some Post readers.

Before the generals reached Bern, the negotiations struck the first of several infuriating snags attributable to Hitler or Himmler. Upon reaching Fasano on March tenth, Wolff learned that, the day before, Hitler's personal airplane had come for Kesselring, taking him to Führer headquarters, the supposition being that the field marshal was being relieved of the Italian command. Blow No. 2 was delivered by Dr. Ernst Kaltenbrunner, chief of the Gestapo under Himmler, who, having got wind of Sunrise, ordered Wolff to break off whatever contacts he had with the Allies. Gruppenführer Harster, as it transpired, had turned in-former.

The news of Kesselring's transfer—verified when Baron Parrilli hurried across the border from Wolff—struck Dulles between wind and water. What had made the Italian situation hopeful was the identity of interest between Wolff, the SS chief, and the Wehrmacht authorities. Receiving Parrilli after midnight in his Zurich apartment, Dulles bade him ask Wolff how he would proceed with a new Oberkommandant not committed to surrender. He strongly urged the SS general to return at once to Switzerland to discuss the technical details of the capitulation with Dulles' military advisers—his description of Generals Lemnitzer and Airey.

On March nineteenth Wolff was back with Major Wenner and young Zimmer, the Swiss secret service facilitating their trip by motor from Chiasso. The talks were held at Ascona on Lake Maggiore near Locarno, every precaution being taken to keep them from prying eyes. The Americans came on two trains, dividing up to avoid notice.

Being a resort, Ascona had sufficient visitors coming and going even at this season, so that a dozen more or less would not be likely to excite comment. However, in order to avoid contact with the villagers, the conferees subsisted for the most part on Army rations brought in for the purpose. Dulles had two villas at his disposal, one for the Germans, the second for the Americans. In the second villa a clandestine radio transmitter was installed for communication with Caserta.

Wolff reported—what our people already knew—that Kesselring, transferred to Rundstedt's command, had never returned to Italy. Hence, he had not been able to convey his desire for surrender to his successor, Col. Gen. Heinrich von Vietinghoff. In as much as Vietinghoff, a nonpolitical general, greatly respected Kesselring, it was Wolff's opinion that a recommendation from Kesselring would be enormously helpful in winning over the new Oberkommandant. This entailed a journey to Kesselring's headquarters, which, having to be made by motor because the Allies had command of the air, would take five, possibly seven, days. To this the Americans regrettably agreed, it seeming an unavoidable delay.

To the generals, who were not identified to him, Wolff explained why the Germans had held Northern Italy instead of retiring to the natural bastion of the Alps. Back in September when Hitler had ordered six crack divisions from Italy to the Western front, preparatory to such a retirement, Kesselring and Wolff had objected, pointing to the value of Northern Italy as a source of food and industrial supply. Whereupon Hitler yielded, giving as his reason a fear that a withdrawal psychosis might spread through the Reichswehr, especially after the sweeping advance of the Allies in France. This governed his decision to stay in Norway also.

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The Allied generals and Wolff did agree on a surrender procedure. Wolff was to deliver two parliamentarians, armed with full powers, to the O. S. S. in Switzerland when the time came for a flight to headquarters at Caserta, where the deal finally would be buttoned up. Dulles engaged to get them across Switzerland to the French frontier and back to their own lines.

When Wolff reached Kesselring's headquarters he found the field marshal only fifteen kilometers ahead of the hard-driving Gen. George S. Patton's Third Army. Nevertheless, Kesselring, according to Wolff, took time out to authorize Wolff to recommend surrender to Vietinghoff in his name. He explained that he could not himself move because he mistrusted his associates. "Our situation," he told Wolff, "is desperate, but nobody dares tell the truth to the Führer, who is surrounded by advisers who still believe in a last, specific secret weapon, which they call the *Verzweigungswaffe*." Translated, that means last-resort weapon. He professed not to know the weapon's exact nature.

Although encouraged, Wolff was subjected to further delay.

Himmler summoned him to Berlin, upbraided him for yielding the Italian partisans, Parri and Usmiani, and asked for a full report on his visits to Switzerland. Wolff dissembled. Ordered to remain in Berlin temporarily, he fled back to Italy when Himmler was unexpectedly called to Hungary. All this promptly was reported to Dulles by the German lieutenant, Zimmer, who crossed the border twice in four days.

Back in Italy, Wolff encountered two new obstacles. Although the new theater commander, Vietinghoff, and his chief of staff, Roettiger, were impressed by Kesselring's endorsement of Sunrise, Vietinghoff declined to move until the situation north of the Alps was clearly seen to be hopeless. He argued with some reason that he had no wish to inspire another stab-in-the-back legend for the postwar consolation of the German people. Hitler was at the moment assuring his people that victory would turn on the battle of Berlin. It seemed plain that Vietinghoff, believing a majority of his officers and men still under the Führer's spell, feared disorder if he acted prematurely and in defiance of Hitler's reiterated orders to hold Italy at all cost.

Vietinghoff's obstructionism was grave enough, but graver troubles were piling up for Wolff on the personal side. Back in Berlin, Himmler telephoned, ordering Wolff not to leave his post again under any circumstances. Employing a characteristic instrument of Nazi terrorism, Himmler broadly hinted that Wolff's family were now being held as hostages for his obedience. Wolff had removed his wife, formerly a Frau von Bernstorff, who once lived in New York, and the children to a refuge in his command near the Brenner Pass. Himmler had returned them to Wolff's estate at St. Wolfgang in the Tyrol for, as he put it, "their safety." Wolff could not know what orders the Gestapo had direct from Himmler, and this new turn gave him cause for fear. To Dulles, via Baron Parrilli, he explained

that he must be careful in as much as he would be of no further service "as a corpse," even though he were a corpse "at a state funeral."

Previously he had promised to be in Ascona on April second with authority to surrender. He sent Parrilli instead, insisting, however, that he was not yet licked. Because of the twin setbacks, Generals Lemnitzer and Airey returned to headquarters at Caserta. Sternly Dulles admonished Wolff, through Parrilli, that Allied successes were shortening the time for surrender. Warning him that he and Vietinghoff would be held personally responsible if Hitler's scorched-earth policy was executed, he reminded Wolff of his detailed promises to safeguard hostages, prisoners and partisans against the Führer's murderous intentions. Since Dulles never put himself in the position of bargaining with the Nazis, all his communications to Wolff had been oral. This time Parrilli had to memorize long passages.

The power drive launched by Alexander and Clark in the first week of

the operator in his own apartment. It had been thought easier to conceal him in Milan than at Wolff's headquarters. Besides providing direct communications from Wolff to Caserta and Bern, Wally engaged in extracurricular activity, pointing the Allied Air Forces to likely targets. In one case, where the target was Mussolini's current hide-out quite near the Zimmer apartment, Wally's directions were understandably precise.

When a tip came from Little Wally to touch up General Vietinghoff's headquarters, which were separate from Wolff's, the Americans marveled at this peculiarly Germanic method of applying pressure. Wolff had inspired the tip.

By mid-April, with the British Eighth and the American Fifth armies advancing steadily toward the Po, the prospects for a useful surrender appeared dim indeed. Meanwhile, two agents provocateurs showed up to add zest to the flagging Sunrise. One, a German consul in Italy known to be a Kaltenbrunner man, sought an interview with Dulles in Wolff's name, exhibiting too much knowledge of the conspiracy for comfort. A pseudo-British officer tried to gain audience with Vietinghoff on behalf of Dulles.

This so alarmed the Oberkommandant that he wrote a full explanation to Jodl at Führer headquarters, asking absolution and advice. Only after the strongest representations from Wolff, Ambassador Rahn and Roettiger, did Vietinghoff tear up the letter.

Arriving in Switzerland on April sixteenth, Lieutenant Zimmer brought a letter from Wolff containing condolences on the death of President Roosevelt together with assurances that the army commanders under Vietinghoff had been enlisted for Sunrise and that capitulation was imminent, with or without the Oberkommandant. Zimmer reported Gauleiter Franz Hofer, of the Tyrol, just back from Hitler's headquarters with word that the Führer was "crazily" planning vast new counteroffensives.

Despite Wolff's optimism, his letter contained a disquieting note, sharpened the next day when Parrilli appeared with fresh advices. Himmler had ordered Wolff to Berlin. At first he took evasive action, refusing to answer the telephone, but Parrilli reported that Wolff, after drawing up a new will, finally had taken off for Berlin via Prague. At the American end of Sunrise it seemed that little hope remained of ending the Italian war rationally, sparing the Allied forces and the Italian people the final draught of blood. Knowing Himmler, Dulles supposed that Wolff's persistent treachery to the Führer was about to meet its due reward.

This was on April seventeenth. The pay-off came four days later in a dispatch from Washington, quickly confirmed by AFHQ, ordering Dulles to terminate all surrender conversations with the Germans forthwith. The order, bearing the imprint of the High Command, carried no explanation. To Dulles it appeared that all hope had fled; that the war in Italy must now go on to its bitter and appointed end.

Editors' Note—This is the first of two articles by Forrest Davis. The second will appear next week.

FINALE

By Frederick Ebright

Weary of its season, the golden butterfly rests on gold leaf
And flees once, twice, thrice its wings and then is still;
For both these frail and lovely things the hour is brief;
Both leaf and butterfly are mindful of encroaching chill.

And weary of its own hours, the bronze sundial
Stands passive and unmoved beneath a thinning sun;
A locust churrs once only in the bleaching yellowed grass,
And in the after silence is a summer thus undone.

And here the heart, like butterfly and leaf,
Or heavy with its time, cries not against the frost,
Full knowing though it does that on this night
The song, the hour and the leaf will all be lost.

April hampered, threatening to disrupt, the line of communications between Dulles and Wolff. More than ever the highways of Northern Italy were unsafe to travel. To Dulles it seemed the time had come to avail himself of Wolff's offer to shelter an Allied radio station within the enemy lines. Chosen for the unprecedented and hazardous mission was a young Czech known as Little Wally, who had been trained as an operator by O. S. S. for a job where a knowledge of German was required. Wally had been studying medicine at the University of Prague when called into the army before the German occupation of Czechoslovakia. Going underground thereafter, he had been caught, imprisoned at Dachau, had escaped, becoming a parachute saboteur with the British, been caught again and had for the second time escaped, this time to Switzerland. Interned, he again got away and in France volunteered for duty with the O. S. S.

Lieutenant Zimmer took Little Wally with his transmitter, cipher books and secret instructions—which, however, divulged nothing of the Sunrise operations—with him to Milan, installing

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